

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6106

As of February 26, 2009

Title: An act relating to collective bargaining for marine employees of the department of transportation.

Brief Description: Concerning collective bargaining for marine employees of the department of transportation.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen and Swecker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/26/09.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

Background: In 2006 the Legislature made a number of changes to the collective bargaining law that applies to ferry workers. These changes included directing the collective bargaining representative of the ferry workers to bargain with the Governor or Governor's designee rather than the Marine Transportation Division of the Department of Transportation. Additionally, specific time frames were set up for the steps in the negotiations; these were further modified in 2007.

The Marine Employees Commission (MEC) is required to conduct a survey of wages, hours, benefits, and conditions of public and private sector employees, along the west coast states of the United States, British Columbia, and Alaska, who do comparable, but not necessarily identical, work. When collective bargaining comes to an impasse, it moves into arbitration. There are several factors that the arbitrator may consider, including the results of the MEC survey.

Washington State Ferries (WSF) employees may negotiate for health care plans and state contributions for health benefits. Additionally, WSF employees are entitled to interest on retroactive pay at the same rate as the State Treasury earns.

Summary of Bill: The factors an arbitrator may consider during impasse procedures no longer references a MEC prepared survey; however, a similar survey that does not include

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

British Columbia is still referenced. The factors an arbitrator may consider during impasse procedures are increased to include:

- the financial ability of the state to pay for the compensation and benefit provisions of the agreements;
- the ability of the state to retain ferry employees;
- a comparison of wages, hours, benefits, and conditions of employment with other state employees;
- the overall compensation presently received by WSF employees; and
- the implicit price deflator for personal consumption index.

MEC's duties no longer require them to prepare a salary survey to be used during negotiations and impasse procedures.

WSF employees may no longer negotiate for health care plans and must negotiate for state contributions for health benefits with the super coalition of other state employee unions already doing so. WSF employees are no longer entitled to interest on retroactive pay.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 26.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.